

Tindaya Mountain

Eduardo Chillida



Tindaya Mountain

Monument to Tolerance, Fuerteventura. Canary Islands, 1996

Eduardo Chillida

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Márcia Nascimento (b. 1982), **Nuno Costa** (b. 1984).

They have a Degree in Architecture from the University of Minho (DAA-UM, 2007) and a Master Degree from the University of Santiago de Compostela (USC, 2009).

Since then, they run their activity as architects developing their own works from which should be underlined the project Tapio Wirkkala's Saivaara Monument, awarded with grants, among others, from the Arts Council of Finland (TAIKE, 2014) and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (FCG, 2017).

They are co-founders of Kärjäjäkivet (2019, onwards).

Synopsis

"Kärjäkivet" is a periodical publication of thought and criticism that was born from a wider project developed around a proposal which was never accomplished, concerning the Saivaara Monument, elaborated in 1978 by the legendary Finnish artist Tapio Wirkkala.

"In 1975, the President Urho Kekkonen expressed as his wish that his monument should be placed in northwestern Lapland, on the Saivaara mountain. [...]"

How to make a monument on a site that is naturally so beautiful that one cannot take away anything from it, neither is man able to add anything to it? Tapio Wirkkala ended up with a proposal in which all the materials of the monument have been picked from the mountain itself.

The monument consists of a straight, paved, almost imperceptible path crossing over the Saivaara mountain. Five stones will be raised from the mountainside to the summit of the mountain, [...]. These stones will form a circle, similar to the court venue stones of the old days [called in Finnish as "Kärjäkivet"], on which the wise men of the village got together in order to decide about common matters. The one who has the strength to climb up the stony path may sit on these stones, look at the landscape and think.

This artless monument is not going to change or destroy the landscape."

Tapio Wirkkala Rut Bryk Foundation Archive, 1978

In this sense, this publication intends to accomplish, not in form but in content, the idea of Tapio Wirkkala for the Saivaara Monument: the creation of a place where men of all races and colors can gather together to think.

For that purpose, an online platform was created where different invited authors gather together through texts, illustrated and edited in small booklets, expressing their thoughts on architecture, art and culture in general, with the Saivaara Monument as the main driver.

Based in Portugal, it is published, as a general rule, every quarter, by adding a new text that can be viewed or downloaded online.



Tindaya Mountain, Fuerteventura. Canary Islands.

Editor's Note

Márcia Nascimento
& Nuno Costa

In this first issue of the second season of Kärjäkivet, it is published the unbuilt Monument to Tolerance conceived by the internationally acclaimed Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida for the Tindaya Mountain in Fuerteventura (Canary Islands). This issue was pleasantly elaborated in a close cooperation with the Chillida Leku museum in the person of its Development Manager Mikel Chillida, who also made possible the inclusion of an introduction written specifically for this issue by Luis Chillida Belzunce, President of the Eduardo Chillida - Pilar Belzunce Foundation.

Conceived almost 20 years after the Saivaara Monument, the comparison between the two projects seems now relevant not only due to the use of landscape and geography as work material, but also because both projects evoked similar poetic values in the relationship between men, nature and the universe. Despite being offered mountains around the world to carry out the project - namely in Turku - Chillida chooses the sacred mountain of Tindaya for the implementation of the project of his life. As in Saivaara, the project is proposed to protect the mountain. Attacked successively by mining companies, the idea was to prevent them from affecting the primitive existing podomorphic engravings in Tindaya by creating an order of how to work in a quarry, since when stone is extracted "empty space is being introduced into the mountain".

The Tindaya Monument has also caused endless political and ecological controversies that led to its non-execution and that deeply hurt the sculptor.

Regarding his Monument to Tolerance held in Seville, Chillida wrote:¹

*"My work 'Monument to Tolerance' is about how important is this virtue, and my desire that it can be manifested in everything I do.
Not just me, but all of humanity.*

Today leaves the last refugee from the city.

Tomorrow we will be tolerant."

¹ Chillida, Eduardo, *Aromas*, Editions Edouard Weiss, Paris, 2000.



Mendi Hutz I. Eduardo Chillida, 1984

© Jesús Uriarte

Tindaya Mountain

- Introduction

Luis Chillida Belzunce ²

I'll try to explain how Tindaya's project came about in my father. From the beginning of his career he refused to make multiples of his works because he preferred to multiply the owners instead of reproducing the artworks. His method of working was the realization of series or variations on the same theme that he worked on successively, in many cases during almost all his life. In this way, he sought to adapt the work, both in scale and material, to a different concept where everyone could enjoy it.

In his first work in alabaster, Homenaje a Kandinsky [Homage to Kandinsky] (1965), the work was done by extracting the material, which meant allowing space and light to enter the material. For 19 years, until 1984, he produced many works in this material and it is here that the work Mendi hutz [Empty Mountain] was created. He realized that his work was the same as that of the stonemasons, but while they were looking for the material, what my father was looking for was the hole, the space that generated this extraction.

Why wouldn't it be possible to find a mountain with mining extraction and in a way that was totally respectful of the mountain itself generate an interior space that would come into contact with the light of the sun, the moon and the horizon? Wouldn't it be possible to confront human beings on their own scale with respect to nature itself? Wouldn't this work make us all equal?

The project began to be prepared in 1994 and consisted of 3 phases:

- 1st phase: Study of the mountain without any intervention and assessment of moving forward. Successfully carried out.
- 2nd phase: Carrying out some tastings in the mountain to get to know the internal structure and the possibility of carrying out the work. Carried out successfully and with positive results.
- 3rd phase: Definition and execution of the project. Not carried out.

For my father this work would undoubtedly be the culmination of his work, but at the same time he knew that in a certain way it was an utopia. The work of an artist is full of utopias and sometimes they are completed, in this case the result can become a "monument to tolerance" in which we would realize our smallness before nature.

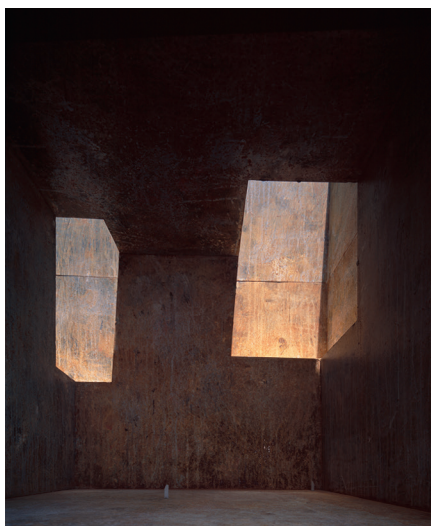
² Luis Chillida Belzunce is the President of Eduardo Chillida - Pilar Belzunce Foundation.

③ EN ESTE MOMENTO SE ESTÁ
ESTUDIANDO LA POSIBILIDAD
DE QUE UNA MONTAÑA DE LAS
ISLAS DE FUERTEVENTURA, EN LAS
ISLAS CANARIAS, PUEDA ACOGER
UN GRAN ESPACIO EN SU INTERIOR.
ESTE ESPACIO, SI LA BUENTURA
ES POSIBLE, TENDRÁ TRES
COMUNICACIONES CON EL
EXTERIOR, DOS DE ELAS BOT-
CANDO LA LUZ DEL SOL Y DE
LA LUNA Y LA TERCERA,
ABIERTA HACIA EL OESTE,
HACIA LA MAR Y EL HORI-
ZONTE, OTRA VEZ INABICAZA-
BLE

10 ¿NO SERÁ EL HORIZONTE LA PATRIA
DE TODOS LOS HOMBRÉS?

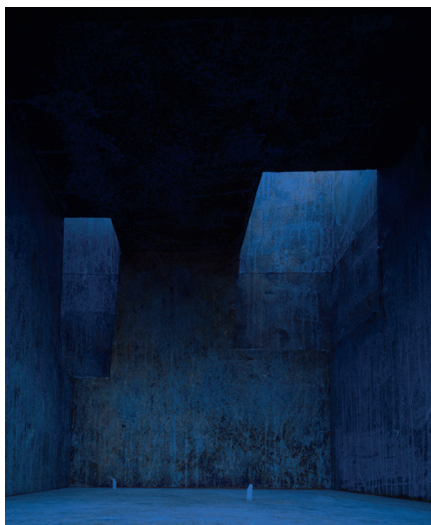
"At the moment, it is being studied the possibility that a mountain on the island of Fuerteventura, in the Canary Islands, can receive a large space inside. This space, if the adventure is possible, will have three communications with the outside, two of them looking for sunlight and moonlight and the third, open to the west, towards the sea and the horizon, again unreachable.

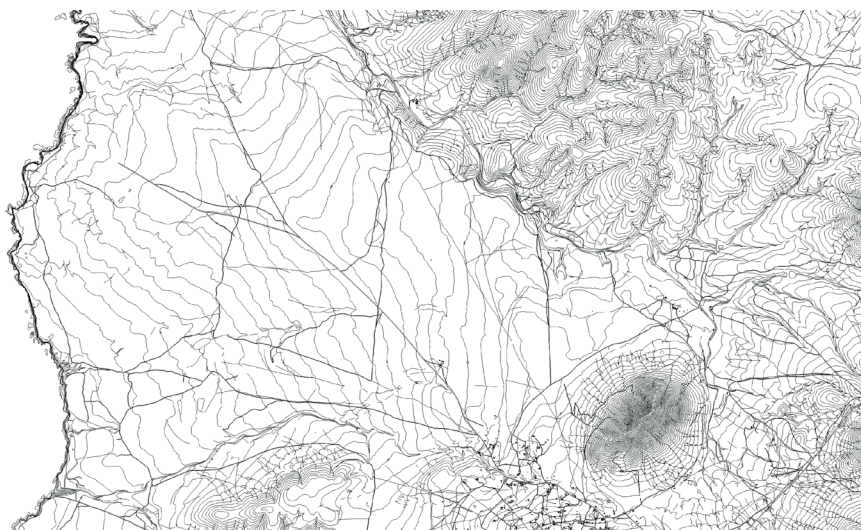
No [Won't the Horizon be the Homeland of all Men?]"



Model of the space inside Tindaya. Sunlight and Moonlight.

© Daniel Díaz Font





Situation plan of Tindaya Mountain, Fuerteventura. Canary Islands.

© Lorenzo Fernández Ordóñez

- The Statement

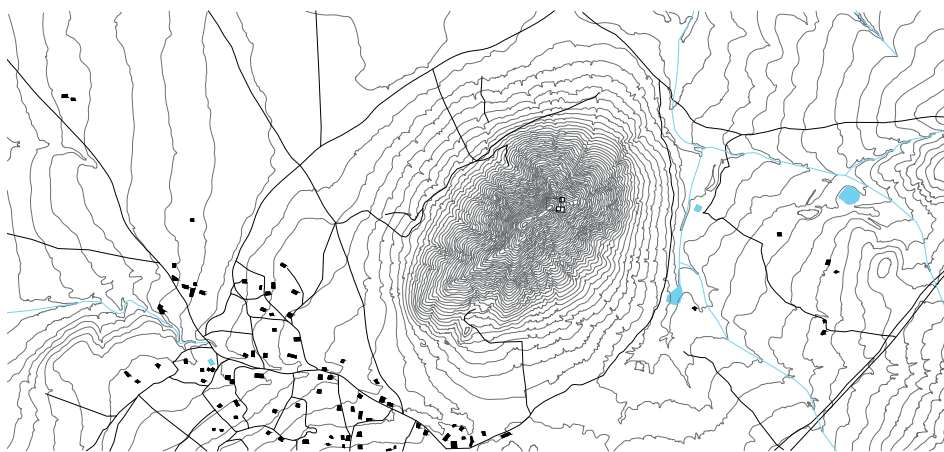
Eduardo Chillida,
Sculptor

Years ago, I had an intuition which I sincerely believed was utopian. To create an interior space within a mountain which could offer itself to men of all races and colors, a great sculpture for tolerance.

One day the possibility of creating this sculpture arose in Tindaya, in Fuerteventura, the mountain where utopia could become reality. The sculpture would help to protect the sacred mountain. The large space created within it would not be visible from the outside, but the men who entered into its heart would see the light of the sun and the moon, from within a mountain spilling out to the sea and to the unreachable, necessary, non-existent horizon...

The support the Regional Government of the Canary Islands gave this sculptural idea reinforced my hopes. I believed that the work would not arouse controversy among the people of the Canary Islands, to whom I thought of donating the sculpture and my work on it. But I have discovered that the project for the sculpture awakened unanticipated resentments and distrust in many people, an opposition whose true importance is difficult to evaluate now, but which was sufficient to undermine my enthusiasm to the point that I stopped work on the project. Nevertheless, I believe it would be very positive to show the people of the Canary Islands and the world what I had hoped to do in Tindaya by means of an exhibition of models and drawings.

The sculpture is conceived as a monument to tolerance, as I said before, and it is a work for the people of the Canary Islands. I do not wish it to be an element of division and much less a bone of contention to be thrown about in political fights, which I do not understand and in which I do not want to get involved.



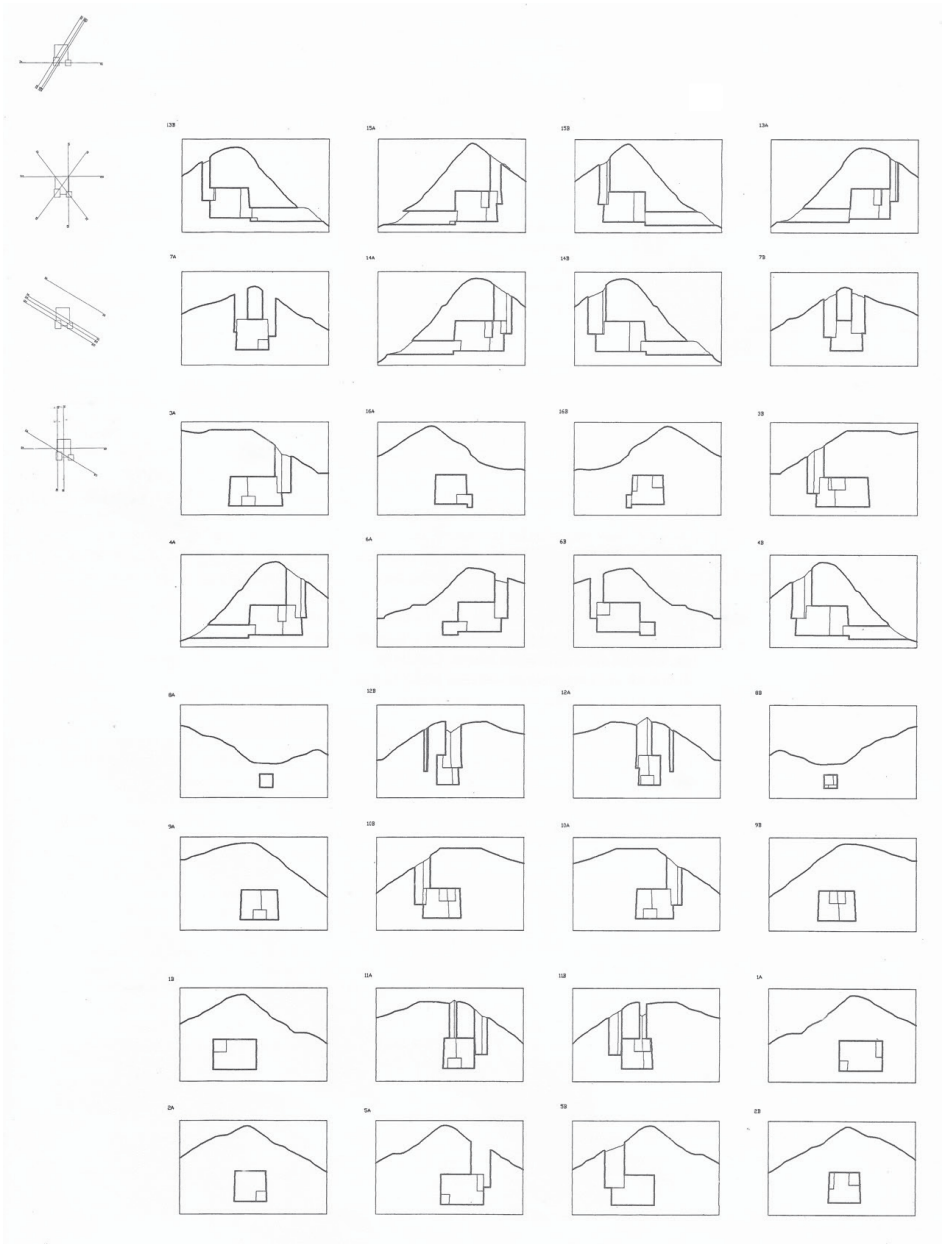
Dimension of the space conceived by Chillida inside Tindaya Mountain: 50x80x50m.

© Lorenzo Fernández Ordóñez

I am only interested in the artistic debate, which lamentably has not taken place. I have neither heard nor read a single unfavourable criticism of the sculpture made by someone who truly knows the project. But I do know that some people who don't know the project have claimed that it would destroy the mountain, when what my work wanted was to save it.

Perhaps utopia can never be reality. Perhaps others will achieve it in another place. Or perhaps the sculpture, that broad and deep space, accessible to the light of the sun and the moon, a meeting place for men, might yet reach the heart of the sacred mountain of Tindaya.³

³ Eduardo Chillida's statement sent to the press in early July, 1996.



Chillida's space in relation to the sea, the human horizon, the sun and the moon.

© Lorenzo Fernández Ordóñez

- Architectural Analysis

Lorenzo F. Ordóñez,
Architect⁴

In Chillida's sculpture on the Tindaya mountain, nothing is accessory. It is not a work that is built solely for an artistic purpose, in which the stone obtained from the interior of the mountain is wasted, but is an intervention that solves the problem of how to work in a quarry, and that gives the guideline to act in nature. The work arises from Chillida's spatial reflection when he is aware that, by obtaining the stone from the quarry, the workers introduce space into the mountain, and he has unified both actions poetically and technologically.

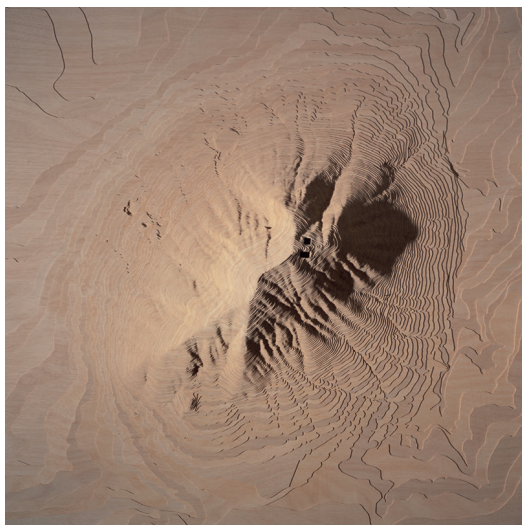
This idea presents a series of technical uncertainties of difficult resolution. It is a work that reaches the constructive maximum of our days, since it surpasses the world record of light in underground spaces, which on the other hand are almost always vaulted.

As well as the artist is used to ask the matter what it wants to be, to force matter to the maximum equilibrium it can reach, it can be seen in this work by Chillida how the sculptor asks the technique about what it wants to be, and how far it can go. But in the question to the technique, regarding the constructive limit that is intended, there is also the need that the thing that is achieved uses the means strictly needed for the purpose that is wanted to be achieved.

With such a great disposal of technical means, such as the one that exists today, in which it is so easy to act, the guideline is to use what we have available in order to reach a work of art, producing the least possible ecological cost.

The space conceived by Eduardo Chillida has been located within the mountain in such a way that it is not affected by the large joints and the currently known dikes. Since the dimensions of the space are large, it was necessary to find an area of the mountain that was not affected by the fracture planes of the material. On the other hand, the sculpture has been placed as far as possible from the area where the podomorphic engravings are found, without interfering in any way, thus guaranteeing its strict preservation.

⁴Lorenzo Fernández Ordóñez is the owner of Estudio Guadiana office, responsible for the development of the architectural study of Tindaya project.



Tindaya Mountain (wood model). The three apertures.

Particular care has been taken to connect the apertures of the sculpture into the surface of the mountain, placing them in such a way that their impact may be minimal. The vertical ones have been placed near the crest of the mountain that separates them. With this we achieve that, from the foot of the mountain and its surroundings, the apertures are almost not perceived. Being hidden by the mountain, one with respect to the other, both apertures cannot be seen at the same time. The aperture of the Sun has been placed on the south side of the mountain and the one of the Moon on the north side, seeking for a cooler light.

The aperture towards the horizon, that looks at the endlessness of the sea, has been hidden in the west fold of the mountain, taking advantage of a quarry and an existing path, which serves as access.

The entrance to the large central inner space is made through the aperture that looks at the horizon and the sea. To preserve the clear view of the horizon from the room, the entrance tunnel has been located at a level a few meters lower than the level of the room. In this way, the visitors of the monument will not appear in the vision of the horizon of the sea from the interior space of Tindaya when they enter and leave, but they will always enjoy a clear horizon. The other two apertures we understand them as representations of the Sun and the Moon, because in them the important thing is the light, as in the Pantheon in Rome, - although looking through the aperture of the Moon some days of the year, the satellite can be seen completely vertical-. The aperture of the entrance offers us - not the representation of a horizon - but the true human horizon.

When we visit the Pantheon in Rome we can see that architecture represents a complete, social, conceptual and religious universe, and in the representation of the cosmos that is established, there is also a proposal of man and civilization. In Chillida's for Tindaya the same thing happens, but it is no longer a proposal that is recreated in a memory of the past, but a project for the contemporary men. A man who unifies art and technology in his relationship with nature. A project of a new way of doing things ruled by art, which brings back our understanding of the universe where we live.

Eduardo Chillida

- 1924** Eduardo Chillida Juantegui was born on January 10 in San Sebastián.
- 1943** Starts studying architecture in Madrid.
- 1947** He abandons his studies and start drawing at the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid.
- 1948** He moves to Paris. He makes his first pieces in plaster.
- 1951** He returned to Euskadi, where he made his first iron work, Ilarik.
- 1954** First solo exhibition in Spain at the Clan gallery in Madrid.
Make the four doors for the Aranzazu Basilica.
- 1958** Receives the International Grand Prize for Sculpture at the 29th Venice Biennale.
- 1972** Make *Lugar de encuentros III* [Meeting Place III], today on the Paseo de la Castellana, Madrid.
- 1974** The steel sculpture *Estela a Pablo Neruda* [Stele for Pablo Neruda] is placed in Tehran.
- 1977** Begins the installation of *Peine del viento XV* [Comb of the Wind XV] in San Sebastián.
- 1990** The *Elogio del horizonte IV* [In Praise of the Horizon IV] opens in Gijón.
- 1992** The *Monumento a la tolerancia* [Monument to Tolerance] is inaugurated at the Muelle de la Sal in Seville.
- 2000** Inauguration of the Chillida Leku museum in Hernani.
- 2002** He died on August 19 in San Sebastián.



KÄRJÄKIVET

Finnish word meaning “court stones” or “circle of stones”: places of judgment (originally iron age graves), where judgments were held and justice carried out, accordingly to the Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

In the ancient times, they were important places where the primitive leaders of the North got together in order to discuss and decide about common matters.

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